

NEW FOOD PLANT RECORDS FOR *CHAETOCNEME DENITZA* (HEWITSON) (LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE: PYRGINAE)

D.A. LANE

3 Janda St, Atherton, Qld, 4883

Abstract

Planchonia careya (F. Muell.) Knuth (Lecythidaceae) and *Lophostemon grandiflora* (Benth.) Cheel (Myrtaceae) are recorded as food plants for *Chaetocneme denitza*, and comments are made on larval abundance on different food plants in northern Queensland.

Introduction

Chaetocneme denitza is regarded as a rare butterfly with a known distribution that includes the Northern Territory and, in Queensland, from Cape York Peninsula to Canungra (Common and Waterhouse 1981). The life history was described by Miller (1990), who listed the only known food plant as *Lophostemon confertus* (R. Brown).

During May and June 1991, ova and first and second instar larvae of *C. denitza* were found on *Planchonia careya* near Granite Creek, 15 km NW of Atherton and in the Mt Garnet area. Larvae fed and developed throughout the winter months, pupated in August and September, and adults emerged in September and October. A second brood followed, with first and second instar larvae present in November and December, 1991. After the summer generation, early instar larvae were not detected again until May, 1992.

Discussion and results

Planchonia careya is widely distributed in tropical northern Australia. Apart from several records for the Wide Bay area (Queensland Herbarium), it ranges from Rockhampton in a broad arc to the Charters Towers area, then across to the Kimberley in Western Australia (A.K. Irvine, *pers. comm.*). It also occurs in New Guinea (Henderson 1982).

In the Ravenshoe area and the Herberton Range near Atherton, larvae of *C. denitza* have been found occasionally during November and December on *Lophostemon suaveolens* and *L. confertus*. In areas where larvae of *C. denitza* have been found on *P. careya*, a marked preference has been shown for this plant over *Lophostemon* spp. Stands of *L. suaveolens* were found adjacent to stands of *P. careya* and in these situations larvae were numerous on *P. careya* but not on *L. suaveolens*. This suggests that in northern Australia, *P. careya* is the preferred food plant of *C. denitza*.

It is of interest also to consider the distribution of *Lophostemon* spp. *L. confertus* occurs from near Newcastle to Fraser Island, occurring further north as isolated stands near Mt Molloy and on the Windsor Tableland, west of Mossman. *L. suaveolens* extends from Cape York Peninsula along the east coast to near Scotts Head, New South Wales (Boland, *et al.* 1984). Another species, *L. grandiflora* occurs across the top of Australia from the Kimberley in Western Australia to Queensland, south to Blackdown Tableland (Boland *et al.* 1984). Larvae of *C. denitza* have been found on *L. grandiflora* in the

Townsville district but are much more common on *P. careya* (S.J. Johnson pers. comm.). Further food plants may yet be found for this intriguing species.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are extended to Dr A.K. Irvine, C.S.I.R.O. Atherton for identification of *L. confertus* and *L. suaveolens*, and for information on the distribution of *P. careya*. Thanks are also extended to Dr I.F.B. Common of Toowoomba, for his constructive criticism of the manuscript and to Dr S.J. Johnson of Townsville, for permission to refer to his unpublished records.

References

- BOLAND, D.J., BROOKER, M.I.H., CHIPPENDALE, G.M., HALL, N., HYLAND, B.P.M., JOHNSTON, R.D., KLEINIG, D.A. and TURNER, J.D. 1984. *Forest trees of Australia*. 687 pp. Nelson and C.S.I.R.O. Australia, Melbourne.
- COMMON, I.F.B. and WATERHOUSE, D.F. 1981. *Butterflies of Australia*. Pp. xiv + 682. Angus and Robertson, Sydney.
- HENDERSON, R.J.F. 1982. Lecythidaceae. In *Flora of Australia*. Vol. 8, pp. 1-6. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- MILLER, C.G. 1990. The life history of *Chaetocneme denitza* (Hewitson) (Lepidoptera): Hesperiiidae: Pyrginae. *Australian Entomological Magazine* 17: 97-100.